



National Commission on the Future of the Army

2530 Crystal Drive, Zachary Taylor Building, Suite 5000
Arlington, VA 22202

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes for Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Site Visit

Dates: 21 Jul 2015

Location: Fort Campbell, Kentucky

Format: Leader and Soldier discussions

NCFA Attendees:

GEN (Ret) Carter Ham – Commission Chairman

LTG (Ret) Jack Stultz – Commissioner

MG (Ret) Ray W. Carpenter – NCFA Executive Director

LTC Michael A. Lockwood – Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Institutional Subcommittee

Mrs. Deborah S. Gantt - Alternate Designated Federal Officer (ADFO)

LTC Brian D. Stevenson – NCFA Staff

LTC Barry K. Vincent – NCFA Staff

Mr. Anthony E. Boyda – NCFA Staff

Mrs. Cherie S. Emerson – NCFA Staff

Mr. Sankar Bhattacharjee – NCFA Staff

Documents Submitted to Commission: Tennessee National Guard Briefing Slides

Media Engagements: No media events were conducted during the site visit; the Commission announced site visit with a press release.

<http://www.ncfa.ncr.gov/reading-room/artifact-tags/national-commission-future-army-conducts-fort-campbell-site-visit>

Meeting Summary – 21 July 2015

The Commissioners and NCFA Staff were flown on C-12 aircraft provided by the Kentucky and Indiana National Guard. The two aircraft had different departure times. AT 0755hrs, the Commissioners and select NCFA staff proceeded in first aircraft to prevent a schedule delay. MG (R) Carpenter, LTC Lockwood (DFO), and LTC Vincent

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traveled with Commissioners Ham and Stultz in the first aircraft. The remainder of the NCFA Staff traveled in the second aircraft.

The first aircraft arrived at Fort Campbell airfield at 0850hrs and the Commissioners and NCFA Staff moved to the 101st Division Headquarters building to meet with Tennessee National Guard leadership. The NCFA Staff in the second aircraft joined the meeting about 30 minutes later.

Tennessee National Guard leadership attendees

MG Jeffrey Holmes, Deputy Adjutant General, Tennessee National Guard
BG Tommy H. Baker, Assistant Adjutant General-Army, Tennessee National Guard
COL Darrell Darnbush, Commander, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment
CSM Daniel Jennings, Command Sergeant Major, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment

Start time: 0905hrs

End time: 1005hrs

Summary: Commissioner Ham opened the meeting by explaining the authorities that established the commission and discussed recent Commission activities. LTC Lockwood, DFO, explained the FACA requirements governing the Commission.

Tennessee Army National Guard (TNARNG) personnel began with an organizational brief on TNARNG. Afterwards, the Commissioners inquired if there was a need for a Trainees, Transients, Holdees, and Students account (TTHS)¹ within the National Guard. The general impression was that having a TTHS account would be problematic.

Commissioners then asked about the projected and current impacts of the Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI) with TNARNG. The Tennessee Guardsmen commented that their state is one of the most impacted states. However, many of their aviators are already qualified on the UH-60 helicopter and can transition when the OH-58s helicopters are taken out of the force.

Commissioners then queried the group on the effectiveness of 1st Army. Several of the representatives, especially from the 278th ABCT stated that while 1st Army is effective in preparing units for mobilization, some of the trainers are less experienced than unit members. Regardless of 1st Army's role, leadership firmly believes that the commander is responsible for validating a unit's readiness to deploy. COL Darnbush related that they have a very good relationship with the 1st Army at Camp Shelby.

¹ TTHS: Trainees, Transients, Holdees, and Students account used for Regular Army manpower when a Soldier is not assigned to a position in an operational unit or institutional organization.

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Commissioner Stultz inquired about the 278th ACR associated AC partner unit. COL Darnbush explained that their partner unit is 1/3 ABCT at Fort Stewart, GA. They have participated with 1/3 ABCT in the 38th Infantry Division Warfighter in February 2015. The 278th ACR is also assisting 1/64 Armor in their training mission in Bulgaria. Bulgaria has been TNARNG partner under the State Partnership Program since 1993.

The discussion shifted to Regional Training Institute (RTI) use. MG Holmes responded that Tennessee's RTI is located in Smyrna, TN. School utilization is estimated at 90-95%, but they did not have exact number. Some AC students use Tennessee's RTI, mainly to attend the Scout Commanders Course. On the subject of schools funding, BG Baker stated that Tennessee is able to send limited numbers of Soldiers to both their PME and AT, but the majority only attend one event per year.

Commissioners thanked the TNARNG personnel for the information and ended this meeting at 1005hrs. Commissioners and NCFA Staff then moved to an office in the same building to meet with the Command Group from the 101st Airborne Division.

101st Airborne Division Command Group attendees

MG Gary Volesky, Commander, 101st Airborne Division

BG Steve Gilland, Deputy Commanding General (Operations), 101st Airborne Division

COL Valery C. Keaveny, Jr., Chief of Staff, 101st Airborne Division

CSM Gregory F. Nowak, CSM, 101st Airborne Division

COL James R. Salome, Garrison Commander, Fort Campbell

Start time: 1015hrs

End time: 1107hrs

Summary: Commissioner Ham opened the meeting by explaining the authorities and activities for the Commission. LTC Lockwood, DFO, explained the FACA requirements.

MG Volesky gave a brief overview of the 101st Airborne Division and the current and recent operations the Division has been involved in. When asked about the operational tempo of the Division, MG Volesky stated the tempo has not decreased over the past few years, especially in the aviation units. Planning and executing Air Assault training is difficult with the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) currently deployed combined with the reduction from two CABs to one CAB at Fort Campbell.

Commissioner Ham asked about the Multi-Compo Division Headquarters (HQ) pilot program and how this initiative was proceeding. MG Volesky stated that he recently

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visited National Guard units in Utah and Michigan and “patched” the Soldiers that will be assigned as part of the Division HQs. He stated the Soldiers were very enthusiastic about their mission and being part of the 101st Airborne Division. A majority of the Soldiers will fill Military Intelligence (MI) and Fires positions in the Division HQs. There is a concern that the Soldiers only have 54 days for training for the year, but the Division G-2 has been working closely with the two states to coordinate training. One aspect of the training will be sending Soldiers from the Division G-2 to each state as a Mobile Training Team (MTT). This is a more efficient use of the Soldiers limited time and should also be less expensive for the Army.

Asked about the stress on Soldiers and families, MG Volesky related that there were three Soldier suicides around the time he took command. The Division Chaplain developed a “Value of Life” program to reduce this trend and there is command emphasis on getting back to the basics of leadership and the Army Values. Leaders are asking their Soldiers the hard questions about stress, reducing the stigma associated with and are actively encouraging Soldiers to get help. Suicides are down by 50% from same period last year.

The last topic discussed was around medical care for Soldiers and their families. Soldier care is the first priority and there are no major issues. Family care is a much more difficult issue. Blanchfield Army Community Hospital is, like many military medical facilities, short-staffed, and is particularly true in the medical specialty skills. The hospital has the authorized civilian positions, but it is very difficult to fill them. Difficulty comes from the military competing with civilian hospitals for the same medical professionals.

When the meeting ended at 1107hrs, MG Volesky invited the Commissioners and NCFA Staff to join him in a conference room following a short break for a discussion with 101st Airborne Division brigade and battalion leaders.

101st Airborne Division, Brigade/Battalion Commanders and Command Sergeants Major attending

MG Gary Volesky, Commander, 101st Airborne Division
CSM Gregory F. Nowak, CSM, 101st Airborne Division
COL Kyle J. Marsh, Commander, 101st DIVARTY
CSM Carl Fagan, CSM, 101st DIVARTY
LTC Joseph Halloran, Commander, 2-320th FA Regiment
COL J.B. Vowell, Commander, 187th Infantry Regiment
LTC Marc Cloutier, Commander, 1-187th Infantry Battalion
LTC Patrick Harkins, Commander, 3-187th Infantry Battalion

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LTC Kurt Smith, Commander, 2-506th Infantry Battalion
COL Brett G. Sylvia, Commander, 502nd Infantry Regiment
CSM John A. Brady, CSM, 502nd Infantry Regiment
CSM James R. Basham, CSM, 1-502nd Infantry Battalion
COL Kimberly J. Daub, Commander, 101st Sustainment Brigade
LTC Nikolaus Guran, Commander, 101st Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion

Start time: 1120hrs

End time: 1210hrs

Summary: Commissioner Ham explained the authorities that established the commission. LTC Lockwood, DFO, then explained the FACA requirements.

Commissioner Ham began the discussion asking about the 101st efforts in AC/RC partnerships and how these partnerships contribute to readiness. MG Volesky stated that the program outlined at the Pentagon is different from what he sees at this level. The program does not provide a plan, just the left and right limits. The level of AC and RC commitment seems to be diverse across the Army.

The 101st is engaged with units from nine different states and coincidentally they are hosting command teams and State Adjutant Generals this weekend to conduct long-range planning and coordinate training opportunities. Although the Division was still in the early stages of the program, 101st leaders felt the RC to AC ratio might be too high, where having fewer units to partner with would likely improve the quality of training.

Describing his experiences partnering with the 36th Infantry Division DIVARTY for a Warfighter exercise, COL Marsh related that partnership has to be an “all in” relationship in order to be successful. Managing expectations from both sides is a critical step and as well as working with 1st Army to tailor training objectives. COL Marsh and his counterpart at the 36th spent a great deal of time together coordinating training. Having 101st Soldiers at the 36th Inactive Duty Training (IDT) periods was a critical piece of the relationship. He related that part of the formula is funding. Currently the 101st Division is resourcing the program, but that is not an ideal situation.

Commissioner Ham asked the group about their deployment experiences with reserve component units. Overall the consensus was that reserve component Soldiers were very good, especially at technical skills, but the NCOs needed more development at Soldier management skills. The group related that reserve component aviators were in many cases more experienced in overall flying skills, but early in the war they lacked the experience at higher level collective tasks. By 2010, there was very little difference

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between A/C and R/C aviators. Providing the time to complete post-mobilization training makes a world of difference. One big issue early in Iraq operations was the lack of familiarity with the newest equipment. Some reserve component Soldiers saw some of the newer equipment for the first time in theater. Later in the war this wasn't as big an issue, but the takeaway is Soldiers must train on the equipment used in theater, even if the training occurs at the mobilization station.

Commissioner Ham then asked the group about the impact of downsizing the Army on retention. All agree that even with the high operational tempo Soldiers are happy doing their mission, morale is good. There is no major angst amongst the lower enlisted, but the mid-grade NCO's and junior officers are concerned about reductions.

The discussion concluded at 1210hrs ending Commission business for this site visit. Commissioners and NCFA staff moved to Louisville airport via C-12 aircraft for commercial airline flights home.